

Nashville District

Human Resources Newsletter

"News You Can Use"

Issue 04-15-03

15 April 2003

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep Nashville District employees informed about personnel issues, concerns, and topics. You are encouraged to review the information and disseminate to your organization. If there are particular areas of interest that you would like to see addressed in future issues, an article of general interest, or general comments, please contact John Restey at 615-736-5538 or John.G.Restey@lrm02.usace.army.mil.

General News:

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

-The **"Gift of Groceries"** program helps meet the family needs of our Guard and Reserve troops.

www.commissaries.com/certifcheck/index.htm

-Donate a **"calling card"** to help soldiers stay in touch with their families

www.operationuplink.org

- Send a **"greeting card"** via email through Dear Abby

anyservicemember.navy.mil

- Send a **"virtual thank you card"** to any soldier

defendamerica.mil/nmam.html

- Army **"Stars and Stripes"** newspaper will include **daily messages to servicemembers overseas** (*limited to 50 words or less*)

www.messages@stripes.com

-Operation **Soldier Support**

www.operationsoldiersupport.org/

-Donate to **"Operation USO Care Package"**

www.usometrodc.org/care.html

Support the American Red Cross **Armed Forces Emergency Services**

www.redcross.org/services/afes

* **Military Relief Societies**

Army Emergency Relief
www.aerhq.org **Navy / Marine Relief Society**
www.nmcrrs.org
Air Force Aid Society
afas.org
Coast Guard Mutual Assistance
cgmahq.org

***Presidential Prayer Team**

To register a military person you know or to "adopt" a military person (one will be assigned to you), go to
www.presidentialprayerteam.org

***Hugs to Kuwait**
groups.msn.com/HugsToKuwaitAdoptASoldier

Do You Know An Unsung American Hero?

Nominations are open for the **2003 Service to America Medals**
<http://www.govexec.com/pps/>. Created by *Government Executive* and the Partnership for Public Service, the Service to America Medals recognize the accomplishments of America's public servants and are accompanied by a cash prize. Award categories include: Federal Employee of the Year, Career Achievement, Call to Service, and other categories in specific government fields. Honorees will be saluted by dignitaries at a gala on October 15 and will be featured in the pages of *Government Executive*, *National Journal*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Submit nominations at <http://www.govexec.com/pps/> by May 2.

Bill Would Close Pay Gap for Active Duty Federal Civilians

Senate lawmakers introduced a bill that would require the government to pay the difference between civilian and military wages for federal employees called to active duty. More than 120,000 federal employees serve in the National Guard and Reserves, and nearly 14,000 of them have been called to active duty to help fight the war in Iraq. But most of those employees earn less as active duty reservists than as civilian workers, according to Senatorial leaders. "We cannot simultaneously encourage Americans to serve their country in the National Guard and Reserves and then punish those who enlist by taking away a large portion of their income, as stated by one leader. One case described an Air Force reservist who took a \$45,000 cut in pay when he was called to duty and left his job as an air traffic controller in Chicago. It is reported that several local and state governments, as well as private companies, have a pay gap plan in place to

address this issue and the federal government needs to do the same. TAKEN FROM GOVEXEC.COM BY Tanya Ballard.

DA Moves to a Resumix/ Self Nomination Central Processing Cell

Army is consolidating the resume and self-nomination processing to a central location. This will complete another phase of the Army's staffing plan to standardize business processes and procedures and support the Centralization of the Army Resumix database.

Consolidation of the resume and self-nomination process is scheduled for April 21, 2003. The Central Resume Processing Center (CRPC) will be assigned to the **Northeast Civilian Personnel Operations Center** located on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. The Northeast CPOC will coordinate the transition to the CRPC with the participating regions.

The CRPC will be the site for processing resumes, self-nominations and customer inquiries for the Centralized Resumix database used by the Europe, Northeast, North Central, South Central, Southwest and the West Civilian Personnel Operations Centers (CPOCs). The Pacific and Korea CPOCs will migrate to the Central Resumix database in the near future. Until then, applicants wishing consideration for positions in the Pacific and Korea will need to submit a separate resume with the appropriate supplemental data sheet to the Pacific and/or Korea CPOC.

NEW LINK

There is a new link on the HR web page called Division Regulations.

Health And Benefits:

USACE Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring Guide

It's here! The new, on-line *Coaching, Counseling and Mentoring Guide* from USACE Hqtrs. The *Guide* was created to support the *USACE Campaign Plan* and "*People Objective #3 - Develop Leaders at all Levels.*" It includes an overview of each process and practical 'how to' tips. It is a useful refresher for experienced supervisors, a comprehensive tutorial for new supervisors, and a resource tool for all employees. The guide can be found at <http://USACE-CCM-Guide.com> <http://usace-ccm-guide.com/>. POC at USACE is Ms. Margaret Tindal-Fisher, 761-8997 and Nancy Stragand, 202-761-0400.

TSP Record Keeping System to be Launched in June

The automated record keeping system for the Thrift Savings Plan may finally be ready to roll in June. During a recent TSP board meeting, Lawrence Stiffler, director of TSP's Office of Automated Systems, said mid-June looked "pretty good" for the new system to be ready for operation. If the system is launched in June, it will end six years of stops and starts in the board's attempt to create a program that would show account balances in shares as well as dollars; offer more ways for participants to withdraw money and provide online service for loans and withdrawals. It would also allow participants to check the value of their funds daily. Currently, the value of TSP accounts is updated monthly rather than daily, and some transactions take several weeks to process. Nearly 3 million civilian and military participants have about \$100 billion invested in the TSP. At a meeting in February, thrift board members agreed to commit another \$994,000 to the project to help pay for a parallel testing phase, to ensure the new system can handle the TSP's high volume and complex transactions. Last October the system's launch was delayed indefinitely because the new system couldn't handle large numbers of TSP transactions at once.

TSP Open Season The spring TSP open season begins on April 15 and runs to June 30. During open season, civilian and military employees can enroll in the 401k-style program or current participants can change their contribution amounts. Employees under the Federal Employees Retirement System can contribute up to 13 percent of their basic pay each pay period to the TSP, up to an annual limit of \$12,000 for 2003. Employees under the Civil Service Retirement System will be able to contribute up to 8 percent of their basic pay each pay period up to the annual limit in 2003. In July, TSP participants who are aged 50 and older, and who are already contributing the maximum amount to the TSP without exceeding the \$12,000 IRS limit, will be able to start signing up to make "catch-up" contributions of up to an additional \$2,000 in 2003. TAKEN FROM GOVEXEC.COM By Tanya N. Ballard.

TSP's C fund shows signs of life in March

The Thrift Savings Plan's **C fund** posted positive returns in March for the first time this year. The C fund, which invests in common stocks, increased 0.97 percent, after falling 1.49 percent in February. The fund, which performed poorly in 2002 and has gotten off to a slow start this year, has plunged 24.71 percent in the last 12 months. The **S fund** also rallied last month, rising 1.55 percent after dipping 2.56 percent in February. The S fund, which invests in the stocks of small- and mid-sized companies, has tumbled 22.38 percent since April 2002. The **I fund**, which invests in international stocks, continued to fall in March, dropping 1.90 percent. The fund, which decreased 2.29 percent in February, has declined 23.51 percent in the past year. TSP's steady **G fund** rose 0.33 in March, after an increase of 0.32 percent in February. The fund, made up of government securities, has grown 4.69 percent in the last 12 months. March was a lackluster month for the **F fund**. The fund, which consists of fixed-income bonds, slipped 0.05 percent last month, after posting a positive return of 1.41 percent in February. One of the TSP's most consistent performers, the fund picked up 11.79 percent in the past year. TAKEN FROM GOVEXEC.COM BY Kellie Lunney.

MARCH **G Fund 0.33%** **F Fund (0.05)%** **C Fund .97%**
S Fund 1.55% **I Fund (1.90)%**

Food For Thought:

"Some drink from the fountain of knowledge; some only gargle."